

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 17, 1858.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. EVANS submitted the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on Revolutionary Claims, to whom was referred the memorial of Jane M. Kean, Mary A. Reynolds, and Catharine E. Kean, heirs of Roger Kean, deceased, having examined the same, beg leave to report :*

The petitioners represent themselves to be the children of Roger Kean, who was first a lieutenant, and afterwards commander, of a private armed vessel, named the Holkar, fitted out at Philadelphia, and was a very successful cruiser against the enemy in the war of the revolution. The prayer of the petitioner is, that the officers of the national navy, and of private armed vessels, may be put on the same footing as the officers of the army of the revolution. The only claim which officers of the army or their decendants have on the government are such as arise from the resolution of October 21, 1780, by which half-pay for life was promised to all officers who should continue in the army to the end of the war, or to such supernumeraries as should be displaced by the reorganization of the army, then about to take place. The reasons, so far as we can learn them from contemporaneous history, applied solely to the army. Many attempts were made to enlarge the resolution, so as to comprehend other classes, as appears by the resolution of the 26th of January, 1784, which is as follows :

“*Resolved*, That half-pay cannot be allowed to any officer, or to any class of officers, to whom it has not heretofore been expressly promised.”

In the Journal of Congress, May 16, 1785, volume 4, page 518, it is stated that, on the report of a committee, to whom was referred the petition of Johannah Young, widow of the late John Young, commander of the sloop-of-war Saratoga, in the service of the United States, praying for a resolution to entitle her to half-pay, it was resolved, “That it is inexpedient to comply with the prayer of the said petitioner.”

If the Congress refused to grant the half-pay, or its substitute—

commutation for five years' full pay—to the widow of an officer of the navy, your committee are unable to perceive any reason for extending the half-pay to their children or descendants, after a lapse of sixty years, and especially to officers of private armed vessels, who generally reaped an abundant reward in the profits of the prizes captured by them. They therefore recommend that the prayer of the petition be refused.